



TESTIMONY OF

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BEFORE

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ON

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Chairman Nadler, Ranking Member Jordan, and distinguished Members of this Committee:

Thank you for inviting me to join you today. For nearly 20 years, the Department of Homeland Security and its extraordinary workforce of more than 250,000 dedicated public servants have stood as a cornerstone of public safety against threats foreign and domestic. Over that time, the dangers we face have evolved and so too have the policies, strategies, and tactics we deploy to confront them. Yet what remains unwavering is our determination to carry out our critical mission to keep communities safe across our country.

Terrorism and targeted violence, perpetrated by actors at home and abroad, imperil too many communities. Malicious cyber activity, executed by state-sponsored and other bad actors, targets our networks and infrastructure, with Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine only intensifying the risk. We also still lead a whole-of-government effort to resettle Afghan evacuees – many of whom worked for the United States – in communities across our country, while undertaking a comprehensive, whole-of-government strategy to manage increases in the number of migrants encountered at our border. Further, we continue to combat transnational criminal organizations, narcotics trafficking, and the horrific crimes of human trafficking and smuggling.

Every day, the team at DHS tackles these issues and many more to keep Americans safe. Across our broad mission space, transparency and accountability are fundamental to building trust between our government and the communities we serve. Our Department, which interacts with the public on a daily basis more than any other federal agency, takes this responsibility seriously, and we are committed to remaining guardians of the American people's safety and security while protecting privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties. During this testimony, I look forward to describing how we do this work, including with our partners across every level of government, the private sector, local communities, and Congress.

### **Combating Terrorism and Targeted Violence**

Since the inception of this Department, the threat landscape has evolved dramatically and DHS has remained vigilant against all terrorism-related threats to the homeland. In the years immediately following the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks, the Department focused on foreign terrorists who sought to harm us within our borders and threaten our interests abroad. This threat evolved to include homegrown violent extremists (HVEs) – the individuals in America who are primarily inspired by a foreign terrorist organization's ideology – and has continued to evolve to include those fueled by a wide range of violent extremist ideologies and grievances, including domestic violent extremists (DVEs). DVEs are U.S.-based lone actors and small networks who seek to further political or social goals wholly or in part through unlawful acts of force or violence, without direction or inspiration from a foreign terrorist group or foreign power. These actors are motivated by various factors, including biases against minorities, perceived government intrusion, conspiracy theories promoting violence, and false narratives often spread online.

Today, U.S.-based lone actors and small networks who are inspired by a broad range of violent ideologies, including HVEs and DVEs, pose the most significant and persistent terrorism-related threat to the homeland. The Intelligence Community assesses that racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists (RMVEs) who advocate for the superiority of the white race, including white supremacists, and militia violent extremists (MVEs), present the most lethal DVE movement in the homeland. Per a March 2021 DVE assessment by DHS, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), RMVEs are most likely to conduct mass-casualty attacks against civilians, while MVEs typically target law enforcement, elected officials, and government personnel and facilities.

DHS is prioritizing combating all forms of terrorism and targeted violence, including through its efforts to support the first-ever *National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism*, published by the Administration in June 2021. Since January 2021, DHS has taken several steps in this regard, including by:

- establishing a new domestic terrorism branch within DHS’s Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) dedicated to producing sound, timely intelligence needed to counter domestic terrorism-related threats;
- launching the Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3) to provide communities with resources and tools to help prevent individuals from radicalizing to violence;
- designating domestic violent extremism as a “National Priority Area” within the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) Homeland Security Grant Program for the first time, resulting in at least \$77 million being spent on preventing, preparing for, protecting against, and responding to related threats nationwide in FY 2021;
- providing \$180 million in funding in FY 2021 to support target hardening and other physical security enhancements for nonprofit organizations at risk of terrorist attacks through DHS’s Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP). The FY 2023 President’s Budget request proposes an increase to \$360 million of this critically important program;
- increasing efforts to identify and evaluate mis- dis- and mal-information (MDM), including false or misleading conspiracy theories spread on social media and other online platforms that endorse violence, while protecting privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties; and,
- enhancing collaboration with public and private sector partners – including U.S. critical infrastructure owners and operators – to better protect our cyber and physical infrastructure and increase nationwide cybersecurity resilience through the Department’s Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA).

Further, DHS has renewed its commitment to share timely and actionable information and intelligence to the broadest audience possible. Since January 2021, I&A has convened more than 84 engagements with partners across every level of government, the private sector, and local communities regarding emerging threats. DHS has also issued 100 intelligence products related to terrorism and targeted violence since that time, including five National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS) bulletins to contextualize the threat environment for the public and provide

resources for how to stay safe. The Department's efforts to combat all forms of terrorism and targeted violence are conducted in ways that protect privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties, and adhere to applicable laws.

Reducing the threat of violence and potential loss of life by preventing radicalization to violence is a key DHS priority, and one that we cannot accomplish alone. As I have said several times before, the Department of Homeland Security is fundamentally a department of partnerships. Our ability to execute our critical mission relies on the strength of our partnerships with other federal agencies; state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) governments; campus law enforcement; nongovernmental organizations; the private sector; and local communities. The efforts described above are among those that DHS is pursuing to ensure we can provide our partners with the resources and tools needed to help keep our communities safe.

### **Strengthening Our Nation's Cybersecurity**

Cyber threats from nation states and state-sponsored and criminal actors remain one of the most prominent threats facing our nation. This threat has been heightened by the ongoing Russia-Ukraine crisis. Within the past year and a half, we have seen numerous cybersecurity incidents impacting organizations of all sizes and disrupting critical services, from the SolarWinds supply chain compromise to the exploitation of Log4j vulnerabilities found in Microsoft Exchange Servers and Pulse Connect Secure devices. Further, ransomware incidents – like those impacting Colonial Pipeline, JBS Foods, and Kaseya – continue to rise, as high-impact ransomware incidents against critical infrastructure organizations have increased globally, impacting organizations of all sizes. As of February 2022, CISA, the FBI, and National Security Agency observed incidents involving ransomware against 14 of the 16 U.S. critical infrastructure sectors, and victims in the first half of 2021 paid an estimated \$590 million in ransoms, compared to \$416 million over all of 2020. We believe there is significant under-reporting of ransomware incidents and the true impact is greater. These incidents have reinforced the importance of cybersecurity and how we preserve and defend an open, interoperable, free, secure, and reliable Internet and stable cyberspace.

The rate at which cyber incidents occur is rapidly increasing, and it is the Department's responsibility to help protect our nation's critical infrastructure from these attacks. The private sector, which owns and operates most of the nation's critical infrastructure, plays a vital role in working with CISA to ensure that we are aware of new campaigns and intrusions, which in turn informs CISA's advice to other potential victims – increasing the nation's collective cyber defenses through our collaborative efforts. Mandatory incident and ransomware payment reporting legislation recently signed by the President will help us meaningfully enhance the security and resilience of our nation's networks and critical infrastructure. The information received from these reports from our private sector partners will enable CISA, in partnership with other federal agencies such as the FBI, build a common understanding of how our adversaries are targeting U.S. networks and critical infrastructure. This information will fill critical information gaps and allow us to rapidly deploy resources and render assistance to victims suffering attacks, analyze incoming reporting across sectors to spot trends, and quickly share that information with network defenders to warn other potential victims. We commend

Congress for passing this historic bipartisan legislation, marking a critical step forward in the collective cybersecurity of our nation.

To increase our nation's cybersecurity and resilience, since January 2021, DHS has taken several steps, including:

- in the wake of the May 2021 Colonial Pipeline incident, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) issued two security directives to strengthen the cybersecurity and resilience of our nation's critical pipelines. The security directives require pipeline companies to report cybersecurity incidents to CISA, designate a cybersecurity coordinator to be available 24/7, conduct a cybersecurity vulnerability assessment and provide results to TSA, develop and implement a cybersecurity contingency plan and recovery plan, and implement specific mitigation measures to protect against ransomware attacks. In December 2021, TSA issued two more security directives and additional guidance to strengthen cybersecurity across the transportation sector. These directives require U.S. airports and air carriers, high-risk freight railroads, and rail transit operators to report cybersecurity incidents to CISA and designate primary and alternate cybersecurity coordinators to be available 24/7.
- in July 2021, alongside the Department of Justice (DOJ) and other federal partners, DHS launched StopRansomware.gov – the first whole-of-government website that pools federal resources to combat ransomware and helps private and public organizations of all sizes mitigate cyber risk and increase their resilience.
- in August 2021, CISA announced the creation of the Joint Cyber Defense Collaborative (JCDC) to develop and execute joint cyber defense planning with partners at all levels of government and the private sector, to prevent and reduce the impacts of cyber intrusions and ensure a unified response when they occur.
- in February 2022, DHS established the Cyber Safety Review Board (CSRB), a groundbreaking public-private partnership dedicated to after-action review of significant cyber threats. The CSRB's first review focuses on the vulnerabilities identified in the log4j software library discovered in late 2021 and will be completed this summer.
- in February 2022, recognizing the heightened risk of malicious cyber activity related to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, CISA launched a new campaign called Shields Up to amplify online free cybersecurity resources and guidance for how organizations of every size and across every sector can increase their cybersecurity preparedness.
- through CISA and I&A, DHS continues to work with our federal partners, all 50 states, local jurisdictions, and election technology partners to provide resources to keep our elections secure and resilient and protect election systems from interference.
- DHS also continues to build a cybersecurity workforce that can remain agile and combat evolving threats. To recruit, develop, and retain top-tier cybersecurity talent, in July 2021 we initiated the largest cybersecurity hiring initiative in DHS history; last

November we launched the Cybersecurity Talent Management System and the DHS Cybersecurity Service to increase access to public service careers in cybersecurity, modernize our Department's ability to recruit mission-critical cybersecurity talent, and better compete with the private sector.

## **Ukraine**

Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war on Ukraine has violated the core principles upholding global peace and security. On February 20, 2022, President Biden designated DHS as the lead federal agency for domestic preparedness and response related to the Russia-Ukraine crisis. The Department established a Unified Coordination Group (UCG) to ensure federal coordination to prepare for and respond to potential impacts to the United States related to this crisis, organized around multiple lines of effort, including cyber preparedness, protecting critical infrastructure, managing physical consequences of any incidents, and ensuring resilient execution of core U.S. government functions, including by resolving national-level resource and policy issues in concert with the National Security Council. The UCG's efforts to help build cyber resilience continue the work DHS had been doing for several months to help mitigate cyber risks to U.S. critical infrastructure from Russia and other authoritarian states.

### *Cyber Threats*

On March 21, 2022, President Biden announced that evolving intelligence indicated the Russian Government is exploring options for potential cyber attacks in the United States. The President also made clear that now is the time for the private sector to harden their cyber defenses and ensure they are ready to manage any potential cyber incident. In anticipation of this, since late last year, DHS has carried out a coordinated outreach effort among federal agencies and our critical infrastructure partners to share timely and actionable classified and unclassified information and intelligence regarding cyber threats to strengthen the cybersecurity resilience of our nation. CISA has hosted or participated in more than 90 engagements related to Ukraine, reaching tens of thousands of partners, and has been working closely with TSA, the U.S. Coast Guard, and FEMA, as well as Sector Risk Management Agencies outside the Department, including the Departments of Energy, Treasury, Transportation, Health and Human Services and the Environmental Protection Agency, to leverage the Department's full resources and expertise across sectors and amplify the best practices cited in CISA's Shields Up campaign. Further, CISA is leveraging the JCDC to coordinate defense planning and coordination. Through clear communication channels, the JCDC is able to rapidly protect the networks and infrastructure of tens of thousands of organizations at scale.

We are also closely watching Russia's efforts to shape the information space in Ukraine and have observed narratives – originated in Russian state media and by Russian officials – laundered into U.S. discourse. Further, CISA's MDM team helps stakeholders understand the scope and scale of MDM activities targeting elections and other critical infrastructure, and enables them to take actions to mitigate associated risks and build resilience.

## *Displaced Ukrainians*

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has resulted in senseless violence, forcing Ukrainians to seek refuge in other countries. We are committed to protecting the most vulnerable Ukrainians, including those identifying as LGBTQI+, those with medical needs, third-country nationals who had previously sought refuge in Ukraine, journalists, dissidents, and other vulnerable individuals.

To help the Ukrainian people, the White House announced on March 24, 2022 that the United States will welcome up to 100,000 Ukrainian nationals and others fleeing Russia's aggression through the full range of legal pathways, including the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, nonimmigrant and immigrant visas, and other means. As part of this effort, President Biden announced *Uniting for Ukraine*, which will allow Ukrainian citizens forced to flee their homes as a result of the ongoing Russian invasion an opportunity to temporarily seek refuge in the United States. *Uniting for Ukraine* will provide a safe and orderly process for displaced Ukrainians with a sponsor in the United States to be considered for parole, on a case-by-case basis, for a period of up to two years. Once granted parole, Ukrainians are eligible for employment authorization. In order to be eligible, Ukrainians must have a sponsor in the United States. Sponsors will be vetted by the U.S. government to ensure they are able to support Ukrainians and to mitigate against potential exploitation.

Ukrainians already in the United States can apply for certain benefits or protection, including applying to extend or change a nonimmigrant status or for asylum. On March 3, 2022, DHS announced the designation of Ukraine for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for 18 months. Earlier this month, DHS published a Federal Register notice with instructions for applying for TPS and an Employment Authorization Document.

## **Securing Our Border and Enforcing Our Immigration Laws**

DHS works to secure and manage our borders while building a safe, orderly, and humane immigration system.

Violence, food insecurity, poverty, and lack of economic opportunity in several countries in the Western Hemisphere are driving unprecedented levels of migration to our southwest border. The devastating economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the region has only exacerbated these challenges, while human smuggling organizations peddle misinformation to exploit vulnerable migrants for profit.

The Biden-Harris Administration is committed to pursuing every avenue within our authority to secure our borders, enforce our laws, and stay true to our values. Yet, a long-term solution can only come from long-needed legislation that brings lasting reform to a fundamentally broken system.

On April 1, 2022, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced that, as of May 23, 2022, its Title 42 public health Order will be terminated. Title 42 is not an immigration authority, but rather a public health authority used by the CDC to protect against the spread of communicable disease. Until May 23, 2022, the CDC's Title 42 Order remains in

place, and DHS will continue to process families and single adults pursuant to the Order. However, beginning on May 23, 2022, DHS will return to processing families and single adults using Title 8 authorities.

Under Title 8 of the U.S. Code, those who attempt to enter the United States without authorization, and who are unable to establish a legal basis to remain in the United States (such as a valid asylum claim), will be removed. They are also subject to long-term consequences beyond removal from the United States, including bars to future immigration benefits.

Beginning in September 2021, DHS began planning in anticipation of the eventual lifting of the Order. DHS is leading a whole-of-government plan to prepare for and manage projected increased encounters of noncitizens at our southwest border. Several elements of this plan are already being executed as we manage a historic number of encounters. In doing so, our objective continues to be the safe, orderly, and humane processing of noncitizens, consistent with our laws, while protecting national security and public safety.

The six pillars of our plan are as follows: (1) we are surging resources, including personnel, transportation, medical support, and facilities to support border operations; (2) we are enhancing U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) processing efficiency and moving with deliberate speed to mitigate potential overcrowding at Border Patrol stations and alleviate the burden on the surrounding border communities; (3) we are administering consequences for unlawful entry, including removal, detention, and prosecution; (4) we are bolstering the capacity of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to receive noncitizens after they have been processed by CBP and are awaiting the results of their immigration proceedings. And we are ensuring appropriate coordination with, and support for, state, local, and community leaders to help mitigate increased impacts to their communities; (5) we are targeting and disrupting the transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) and smugglers who take advantage of and profit from vulnerable migrants, and who seek to traffic drugs into our country; and (6) we are deterring irregular migration south of our border, in partnership with the Department of State (DOS), other federal agencies, and nations throughout the Western Hemisphere to ensure that we are sharing the responsibility throughout the region.

DHS has deployed unprecedented numbers of personnel, modes of technology, and expanded resources to the southwest border. The Department has also made critical security improvements along the northern border, and invested in hiring additional U.S. Border Patrol personnel, fielding new technology, and bolstering infrastructure while also strengthening efforts to increase the security of the nation's maritime borders. We have developed an integrated and scalable plan to activate and mobilize resources, increase processing and holding capacity while improving efficiency, and are implementing COVID-19 mitigation measures. We are continuing to process migrants in accordance with our laws, including expeditiously removing those who do not have a valid basis to remain in the United States. With partners, we have launched a counter-network targeting operation focused on transnational criminal organizations affiliated with the smuggling of migrants, and in close coordination with the Department of Justice, we will refer border-related criminal activity to DOJ for prosecution where warranted, including that of smugglers, repeat offenders, and migrants whose conduct warrants such a law enforcement response.



We are also building a more efficient and functional means to quickly process claims for asylum and other humanitarian protections. On March 24, 2022, DHS and the Department of Justice published an interim final rule that will improve and expedite the processing by which asylum claims made by noncitizens are decided. This new, streamlined process will provide prompt relief to those who have valid asylum claims and allow DHS to focus on swifter removal of those whose claims are denied. Once the rule is fully implemented, the timeframe for hearing and deciding these asylum claims will shrink from several years to several months.

DHS has also prioritized the apprehension and removal of noncitizens who are threats to national security, public safety, or border security. On September 30, 2021, I issued a memorandum entitled *Guidelines for the Enforcement of Civil Immigration Law*, which further empowers career law enforcement officials in the field to make discretionary decisions about which noncitizens to arrest, detain, and remove. The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) more focused approach has yielded measurable results. ICE's Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) arrested an average of 1,034 aggravated felons per month from February through September 2021, a 53 percent increase over the monthly average during 2016 and a 51 percent increase during 2017-2020. During the same period in 2021, ICE removed an average of 937 aggravated felons per month, the highest level ever recorded and the greatest public safety impact since ICE began collecting detailed criminality data. From February-September 2021, 46 percent of ICE removals were of serious criminals overall (persons convicted of felonies or aggravated felonies), compared to 17 percent during 2016 and 18 percent during 2017-2020.

The Biden-Harris Administration continues to work with international partners to disincentivize irregular migration and create a more secure and orderly migration system in the Western Hemisphere. In coordination with DOS, the Department is promoting bilateral migration arrangements with several Western Hemisphere countries to codify our areas of cooperation, focused on migration management, stabilization, and legal pathways. We signed the first of these arrangements with Costa Rica in March and a similar agreement with Panama earlier this month. DHS continues to maintain a close partnership with the Government of Mexico to stem irregular migration, create viable legal pathways, foster legitimate trade and travel, and combat the shared dangers of transnational crime. The Department is currently engaged with other countries in the region to advance similar objectives, and in coordination with DOS, continues to work with foreign governments to improve cooperation with countries that systematically refuse or delay the repatriation of their nationals.

### **Combating the Flow of Narcotics into the United States**

DHS employs a multi-layered approach to countering narcotics trafficking. ICE Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Special Agents exchange information, coordinate investigations, and facilitate enforcement actions with law enforcement partners abroad to deter the ability of TCOs to smuggle drugs, people, and contraband into and out of the United States. Pursuant to their narcotics enforcement portfolio, HSI Special Agents conducted 12,920 criminal arrests and seized over 2.4 million pounds of narcotics, which included 14,530 pounds of fentanyl in FY2021. In comparison, HSI narcotics enforcement efforts yielded 12,271

criminal arrests, seizure of more than 1.4 million pounds of narcotics, including 6,105 pounds of fentanyl, in FY2020. In addition, HSI agents seized more than \$188 million in total currency and assets. CBP's National Targeting Center uses advanced analytics and targeting capabilities to identify critical logistics, financial, and communication nodes and exploit areas of weakness in opioid trafficking networks.

## **Combating Human Trafficking and Human Smuggling**

Criminal organizations profit from the two distinct, but related, crimes of human trafficking and human smuggling by targeting and exploiting the most vulnerable among us. DHS is one of the leading federal agencies spearheading the fight against these horrible crimes. Using a victim-centered approach, ICE HSI initiated over 1,100 investigations involving both domestic and transnational human trafficking organizations in FY2021 alone and helps achieve hundreds of federal and state-level convictions each year against traffickers. DHS has a robust Victim Assistance Program for victims of human trafficking (both citizens and non-citizens) and also provides immigration relief to qualifying foreign-national victims of human trafficking and other designated crimes who assist law enforcement.

DHS employs a counter-network approach to confront Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) and other threat networks, leveraging unique authorities, data holdings, and partnerships to disrupt and dismantle these networks. Through an initiative called Joint Task Force (JTF) Alpha, DHS and DOJ are working together to leverage joint investigative, prosecutorial, and capacity-building efforts to investigate and prosecute the most prolific and dangerous human smuggling and human trafficking groups operating in Mexico and the Northern Triangle. JTF Alpha also works closely with Operation Sentinel, which is led by CBP, to counter TCOs affiliated with migrant smuggling by targeting their members, associates, and assets, and employing a series of targeted sanctions against them.

## **Operation Allies Welcome**

DHS remains committed to the resettlement of Afghan evacuees as part of Operation Allies Welcome (OAW). In August 2021, President Biden designated DHS to serve as the lead agency to coordinate efforts across the federal government to support Afghan nationals as they resettle in the United States. DHS established a Unified Coordination Group to coordinate the implementation of a broad range of services, including initial processing, COVID-19 testing, isolation of COVID-positive individuals, additional medical services, and screening and support for individuals who are neither U.S. citizens nor lawful permanent residents.

As of April 15, 2022, we have welcomed more than 78,000 Afghan nationals through OAW, providing them with support and assistance as they begin their new lives. The Department thanks Congress for appropriating funds that enable the United States to provide resettlement assistance, such as cash assistance, medical assistance, employment preparation, job placement, and English language instruction for 95,000 individuals in OAW through the end of Fiscal Year 2022. Afghan nationals continue to be considered for humanitarian parole into the United States on a case-by-case basis. Overseas, there continue to be populations of Afghans in third countries seeking to come to the United States, and we are working with interagency

partners to process those eligible for resettlement. We have begun to process Afghans at Camp As Sayliyah in Qatar for Special Immigrant Visas or through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). With our interagency partners, we have established a system to process Afghans through the USRAP more efficiently by streamlining processing steps at a centralized location.

In all cases, Afghan evacuees complete a rigorous and multi-layered screening and vetting process that includes national security and criminal records checks before they can enter the United States. This process includes intelligence, law enforcement, and counterterrorism professionals from DHS, the Department of Defense, State, FBI, NCTC, and other Intelligence Community partners reviewing fingerprints, photos, and other biometric and biographic data for every Afghan evacuee. Only those evacuees who clear these comprehensive checks are approved for onward travel to the United States.

As we continue to welcome Afghans to the United States through OAW, the U.S. government will continue to work closely with state and local partners to ensure the safe resettlement of our allies. For the balance of Fiscal Year 2022, the National Conference Center in Leesburg, VA will serve as the domestic safe haven for OAW-eligible Afghan parolees as they complete processing before being connected with resettlement agencies and partners who help them move to their new communities. To help Afghan nationals sustainably resettle in communities across the United States, DHS-led “Welcome Centers” are providing on-site services and referrals to ensure individuals and families have access to federal, state, and local benefits for which they qualify, and remain connected to federally funded resettlement networks.

### **Additional Authorizations**

In addition, there are two reauthorizations that the Department requires to continue its work in critical mission spaces.

First, the authority to establish and operate Joint Task Forces (JTFs) sunsets at the end of this fiscal year. JTFs provide a direct operational coordination layer to enhance the multi-faceted challenges facing DHS. JTFs remove stove-piped approaches to meeting challenges. They do this by developing and implementing an integrated approach that maximizes resources and capabilities within the Department for long-term missions and challenges. Today, JTF-East (JTF-E) is responsible for ensuring Departmental unity of effort in the southern maritime approach to the United States and demonstrates the tangible, positive impacts that JTFs can have on enhancing DHS operations.

Beyond setting cross-Department wide goals and planning in a unified manner, JTFs further the Department’s maturation by empowering Department officials to focus the Department’s resources, to achieve DHS goals. This realizes the promise in the Homeland Security Act and subsequent creation of DHS to bring together organizations with homeland security roles in a coherent whole to achieve comprehensive security.

Lastly, the Department appreciates the current authorities to conduct counter unmanned aircraft systems (C-UAS) operations. Detection efforts and C-UAS deployments during the past

two years have confirmed the threat from unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) is real and significant. Components are combating a multitude of threats from malicious and errant UAS operators, including thousands of illegal cross border flights every year, surveillance of our agents and operations, conveyance of contraband across the border, and the potential for drones to cause disruptions at airports and other critical infrastructure with great economic and impact. DHS has deployed C-UAS equipment over 250 times to protect senior government leaders, Special Event Assessment Rating events, National Special Security Events, the southern border, and other sensitive federally protected facilities.

We look forward to engaging with you, your staff, and other key stakeholders in the near future regarding the recently submitted C-UAS legislative proposal.

## **Conclusion**

While DHS was created in response to a singular threat, among the Department's most impressive achievements in the two decades since 9/11 is its ability to evolve to address multiple complex challenges at once. Through it all, our workforce has demonstrated exceptional skill and an unwavering commitment to keeping our country safe.

I am grateful to this Committee for your continued support of DHS, both from a resource perspective and the provision of key authorities that allow the Department to adapt to an ever-changing threat landscape. I look forward to our continued work together and to answering your questions. Thank you.